

THE
NECESSITY and ADVANTAGE
OF AN
Early Victory over Satan :
WITH
Some RULES for the obtaining of it.
IN A
S E R M O N
PREACHED TO
An AUDITORY in *London*

By T. C R U S O.

Exod. 22. 29. *Thou shalt not delay to offer the first of
thy ripe fruits*——

L O N D O N :

Printed for *Thomas Cockerill*, and *H. Bernard*, at the
Three Legs, and the *Bible*, in the *Poultry*. 1693.

THE

NECESSITY AND ADVANTAGE

OF AN

Early Vigor over Satan:

WITH

Some Rules for the obtaining of it.

IN A

NEW EDITION

REACHED TO

An Auditor in London

By T. C. L. G. O.

Printed by T. C. L. G. O. in the Year 1794

Printed by T. C. L. G. O. in the Year 1794

THE
PREFACE.

THE general unsuccessfulness of our Publick Ministry, hath been a great while the just and sad Complaint of those that labour in the Word, and look after the Fruit of that labour; And all sorts of Persons do yet give too much Cause, yea, more Cause than hath been formerly given, for the renewing of this Complaint. Various Applications have been made to various Ranks and Orders of Men, but still they have had the same issue, as in the Prophet's time; The poor know Jer. 5. 4, 5. not the way of the Lord, and those of greater quality, have broken the Yoke also: Both wretchedly averse to the receiving of Instruction. Age and Youth have likewise had their Portions of seasonable Counsel, but the desir'd Effect is not hitherto seen; they that are but newly enter'd into the World, and they that are manifestly going out of it, still joyning hand in hand, and drawing Iniquity together with cords of Vanity.

The Preface.

In this mournful case, any serious Person might very well be stirr'd up to consider, what Endeavours are to be further used, and upon what Subjects they are most likely to make some Impression: And because it hath been sometimes observed, That God by his Spirit takes hold of young ones, when the Gray-headed Sinners are left to the ways of their own hearts, (as the Parents of the Man born blind, unthankfully denied Christ before the Pharisees, but their Son confest him boldly) it may afford a little the more Encouragement to continue dealing with them especially. Besides, as they need to be Men of Eminent skill, who engage in the cure of inveterate Diseases, when one of inferior Abilities, may adventure upon a Wound that is fresh; so it may seem a more proper task for him that willingly takes the lowest place among the Children of the House, to attempt the reducing of vain Prodigals, that are wasting the dew of their Youth in the Service of Sin, than to persuade those to a return, who are full of days, and of wickedness at once.

It is not altogether improbable, that Men may be somewhat the easier to be intreated by one of their own Rank; the Apostle intimates thus much, when he says, The Elders which are among you, I exhort, who am also an Elder; and if by the like Argument, I might recommend the follow-

John 9. 20.
21.

1 Pet. 5. 1.

The Preface.

following Discourse to the better Acceptance of Junior Readers, I shall reckon my self bound to thank God always, upon every remembrance of its good Effects, that he put such a Design into my heart, and enabled me in any measure to a performance of it. I am sure, That I cannot be reasonably suspected of serving the ends of Vain glory by it, and therefore shall not here raise such a suspicion by making the least Apology for its plainness; for that I have sincerely studied, as far more likely to affect the heart, and be attended with a Divine Blessing, than the most pleasant and artificial sound of words.

It ought not to be conceal'd (if it could be) that many excellent and valuable Authors, have with vastly more advantage, as well as in much larger Treatises, written to the same purpose; and I freely acknowledge, that I should think my Pains in this very well bestowed, if it did but help to revive the serious perusal of some of them, which having been published some time since, may be now perhaps forgotten, or too much neglected. He that comes after all these, hath great Examples to follow, which I am very conscious of doing afar off; but I know, That God makes use of several Instruments and Means in his own Work; and many times those, who are under the least Temptation of taking his Glory (if he prosper them) to themselves;

THE PIERCE.

Cor. i. 27.

Edges 7. 20.

selves; for he hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the mighty; and it is possible to him, to make a poor Lamp in an earthen Pitcher, as fatal to the Devil's Kingdom, as things of that kind once were to the Host of Midian. And therefore in humble Hope of God's effectual Workings by it, I send it forth into the World, earnestly beseeching him, who is the Fountain of Light and Grace, that it may be unprofitable to none that read it, that it may be in a particular manner useful to those that heard it, and solicited this Publication.

T. C.

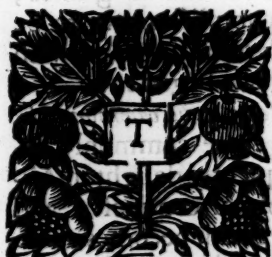
May 29. 1693.

THE

THE
NECESSITY and ADVANTAGE
OF AN
Early Victory over Satan.

I JOHN II. 13. (Middle Part.)

—— I write unto you, young men, because ye
have overcome the wicked one. ——



HERE is such a fulness in the Scripture, as truly renders it a perfect Rule, and capable of thoroughly furnishing unto all good works both the man of God, and the babe in Christ; for it does so suitably accommodate it self to the various cases and conditions of all persons, that none need to be at a loss for particular direction, if they will faithfully seek it here. As every one's general Duty is plainly laid down, so our most special Duties are described likewise, which arise from the special circumstances wherein we stand. And among other things, the Holy Ghost is pleas'd to consider our differing Ages, for which reason he makes use of the beloved Disciple's Pen here in the Text, to write to three sorts,

B

Fathers,

The Necessity and Advantage of

Fathers, Young men, and little Children; and he writes that which was proper for them all, according to those measures of *spiritual improvement* and proficiency, which they might be justly suppos'd to make. All that receive the seed into good ground, do not bear *equal fruit*; some bring forth an *hundred fold*, some *sixty*, and some *thirty*: Now if we were to apply this to those three ranks of persons which have been mentioned, it would be expected that the Fathers should produce an hundred for their share, the Young Men sixty, and the Children thirty.

Matt. 13. 23.

The Distribution made in this *Verse*, is exceeding pertinent: 1. *I write unto you, Fathers, because you have known him that is from the beginning.* Fathers

Psaln 44. 1.

are men of experience, and most conversant with *Antiquity*; often discoursing of men that have existed, and things that have been done long since; therefore it is their peculiar accomplishment, to be eminently acquainted with the Everlasting God, with him who was, before any thing else began to be. 2. *I*

write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one. Persons at this age are commonly remarkable for their activity, frequently delight in *Military Exercises*, and are ambitious of conquest; and therefore in the flower of their years it becomes them to be valiant *Soldiers of Christ*; and if through Grace they are made successful against the enemies of their Souls, it is their greatest honour. 3. *I write unto you little children, because ye have known the Father.* Infancy and Childhood is not a season of much knowledge; but yet, even then, we usually are able to distinguish our *Parents* from other men; and therefore a sanctified understanding of God, who is far more to us than our *natural* Progenitors, should grow up with us be-

2 Kings 4. 18.

times.

times. And indeed, if in our tender years, when we first begin to speak, and discover some *buddings of reason*, we are taught to have some proportionable sense of our *Father in Heaven*, who hath *formed our spirits within us*, 'tis an happy presage of our future increase in Divine Wisdom.

But intending this Discourse chiefly for the instruction of the *second sort*, I shall more largely handle what is written to them: and accordingly I propose this *Doctrinal Truth*, as the foundation of the whole, That

An early victory over the wicked one, is the peculiar duty of young persons.

Obf.

In prosecuting this, I shall endeavour to shew

- I. Who is this *wicked one*.
- II. What it is to *overcome him*.
- III. How it can be said of any persons in this world, that they *have overcome him*?
- IV. Why this is the *peculiar Duty* of *young ones*?
- V. Apply it.

I.

II.

III.

IV.

V.

First, To shew who is this *wicked one*, for he is exprest here in the singular number, (*Тотъ Покоръ*.)

I.

I do not find this *Title* given in Scripture to any but to *Satan*, and to *Antichrist* his First-born. To *Satan* it is twice given by our *Lord* himself; *Then cometh the wicked one and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart*; which is elsewhere attributed to the *Devil*, in the Explication of the very same Parable. Again, *the tares are the children of the wicked one* (says Christ) which in plainer terms, is the *children of the Devil*, as the same kind of persons are stiled in other places. It is the Character given to

Matt. 13. 19.

Mark 4. 15.

Matt. 13. 39.

Ephes. 6. 11,
16.

1 John 3. 12.

5. 18.

2 Thes. 2. 8,
9. 140
Dan. 11. 36.

him once by Paul; for the same Adversary whom he calls the Devil in one verse, he entitles the wicked, (or wicked one, as the word might be render'd) in another: It is given to him twice more by John in this very Epistle: Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, meaning the murderer from the beginning. And again, he who is begotten of God, keepeth himself, and that wicked one (who is emphatically so) toucheth him not. The same Name is once put upon Antichrist; and it is no wonder, for his coming is after the working of Satan: Then shall that wicked (or lawless one) *ὁ ἀνέμωτος*, resembled formerly by Antiochus, who did according to his Arbitrary will) be revealed, &c. If we look to Antichrist's Pedigree, Constitution, and Practice, this Character will be found much more agreeing to him, than that blasphemously assumed Title of His Holiness, which the Roman Profelites readily bestow upon their Infamous Head.

Now 'tis evident enough, that Antichrist is not here meant in the Text by the wicked one; for how could they be said to have overcome him, that had not yet appear'd; the mystery of iniquity was then working, but not brought forth: many Antichrists were risen, very dangerous and Heretical Seducers (such as our Modern opposers of the Godhead of Christ) but the Antichrist did not discover himself to the world till a great while after. It must therefore be Satan, whom the Spirit of God here intends; he being our principal enemy without us, though undoubtedly all his Officers and Emissaries, his Agents and Instruments in the world are included under him, as the objects of our holy Victory; for so 'tis hinted afterwards; Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them.

1 John 4. 4.

But

But then it may be inquir'd, why are those vast *multitudes* of Apostate Spirits, whom we have to combat with, set forth and represented as a *single Adversary*? What an *innumerable Company* of fallen Angels may we well suppose, when a *Legion* of them could be spar'd to take up their *quarters* in one Man? Mark 5. 9. What therefore should be the reason that they are all contracted and summ'd up into a *wicked one*? I answer,

1. In *opposition* to Christ, who is stiled the *Holy One*. Acts 3. 14. Our Lord Jesus, and the *Ruler of the darkness* of this World, are the Heads of two contrary Parties; they have their distinct *Seeds*, between whom there is a rooted and incurable *Enmity*; they have two opposite *Kingdoms*, and govern by quite contrary *Laws*. *What concord hath Christ with Belial*? And therefore 2 Cor. 6. 15. as Christ is one (not divided, nor multiplied, for there is but *one Mediator*, and this is he) so is he that *multiplies* against him, describ'd as one likewise. 1 Tim. 2. 5.

2. In respect of those *many moral Evils*, which are reduced to one *Original* in him. The Devil is the proper *Parent* of most of the Sins, and of all the Sinners in the World; the greatest part of the Evils committed, are by his *Instigation*; and the Persons committing them, are his filthy *Off-spring*. It is laid down as an universal Proposition, *He that committeth sin, is of the Devil*. 1 John 3. 8. The several sorts of Transgressors have all one Father, for God acknowledges none, but such as are renewed, and begotten again. Satan teacheth the wicked ones his ways, and makes them do his *Wills*.

3. The Evil Spirits have one that is a *chief* among them; or else, what is the meaning of the (*ὁ ἀρχὴν*) *Prince of the Devils*? Mark 3. 22. And why does our Lord speak of

The Necessity and Advantage of

Matth. 25. 41. of the Devil and his Angels? This intimates some pre-
 eminence and command, or it will seem to be spoken
 in vain. It is very probable that the Ringleader in the
 first Rebellion (for which they were immediately
 expelled out of Heaven) is still the President of that
 infernal Society; he that gave such a wretched Ex-
 ample, does yet exercise a kind of Authority. They are all united in their Interests and black
 Designs. They are universally animated by the same
 Spirit of malignity, and unweariedly pursue the
 same pernicious end. In the general Assembly of Is-
 rael at Mizpah, they are said to be gathered together as
 one man; so there is a most entire Conjunction of all the
 Devils in Hell to promote the dishonour of God, and
 the ruin of Souls to the very uttermost. Their Wiles
 and Policies do all meet, their Strength and Force is
 all joyn'd together. What is done, they do with one
 Consent, as being perfectly Confederate against our
 Lord, and against us.

II.

Secondly, What is it to overcome this wicked one?
 To open this the more fully, I would do these three
 things. 1. Undeceive those, who satisfy themselves
 with a great deal less than is truly necessary. 2. Re-
 move the mistakes of those, who think more necessa-
 ry, than indeed is so. 3. Shew wherein real Victory
 consists. To undeceive such as content themselves with
 much less than is truly requir'd to our overcoming of
 the Devil: As

1. A Renunciation of him and of his works in Bap-
 tism, is not enough to overcome him. Such a for-
 mal defiance is often accompanied and followed with a
 real subjection. The application of the token of the
 covenant

covenant to *Simon Magus*, did not discharge him from the *bond of iniquity*. Many of the worst enemies of *the Cross of Christ*, have been solemnly engag'd to fight under that banner. The Devil hath rather more power over some visible professed Christians, who have taken the Redeemer's Badge upon them, than over the most barbarous and brutish Heathens; as the Uncircumcised Nations of old did him less service than some profligate Jews, whose Dedication to God had been sealed by *Circumcision*. There is no Ordinance of God which works as a Charm, without being practically improved for our defence against our Spiritual Enemies. If we only give our Names to the Lord, Satan may still keep as much as he desires, and be as truly our Sovereign, as if we had sworn Allegiance to him.

2. An escape from gross Pollutions is not enough. A man may be as absolutely conquer'd by Spiritual Wickednesses, as by any other. Unseen defilements do as effectually maintain and support the Devil's Empire in the soul, as the most open debaucheries in the life. Inward lustings answer his purpose, as well as outward sensualities; the habitual lifting up of the heart, as well as the pride of countenance, or vanity of apparel. He that fulfils the desires of the mind, tho' not the desires of the flesh, still walks according to the prince of the power of the air. No acts are so scandalous, but that impure thoughts and vile affections will keep as firm possession for the Devil, as they do. A vain mind is his safe harbour, tho' he do not betray his influence by a notoriously vain conversation. A lurking sin in the bosom will be the Pillar of his Throne, when the behaviour appears most innocent and blameless.

The Necessity and Advantage of

3. A refusal of those *Temptations* which are not adapted to our peculiar corruptions, is not enough. If we would impartially and exactly know, Whether the Tempter be too hard for us or not? Whether he is Conqueror, or we are so? We must know what spirit we are of, and which way the bias of our Natural Temper draws us. We must not make those cases the Test where the Devil shoots wide, and offers suggestions that we have little or no inducement within us to comply with, but where he directly hits our darling lusts, and lays the delightful bait before us. It may be, we can drive him from all his slender Fortifications, when he is soliciting us to other sins, but can we beat him out of his strong-hold, or stand against him when he falls in with the stream of our own sinful inclinations? If the Money had not wrought upon Judas's Covetousness, perhaps his heart (as bad as it was) would never have been allured into so base a Treason.

4. A living in undisturbed Security, is no sufficient evidence of our overcoming the Devil, but rather gives suspicion of the contrary. They that are least troubled, are generally most under the prevailing power of Temptation. It is not for Satan's interest to terrify, where he reigns without controul; it much more concerns him to feed our presumptions, and lull us asleep by a false peace, lest our awakening should make way for our Conversion. If the Devil should ordinarily perplex and disquiet his own Subjects, they might bethink themselves of shaking off his yoke; and therefore he strives for the most part to make his Government easy, by stupifying those that submit to it. When we are least sensible of the Devil's opposition, it is certainly most fatal; this is no sign of our getting

getting ground against him, but proves that he hath more thoroughly subdued and vanquish'd us, and that he now keeps us at his own beck.

Secondly, To remove their mistakes, who make themselves uneasy by imagining *those things necessary* to our overcoming of the Devil, which are not. As

1. It is not necessary, that we should be able to free our selves from renewed Temptations. Satan's final rebuke is not to be expected while we are here in the World. How many repulses soever he meet with, we must look for fresh Assaults; how oft soever we put him to flight, he will assuredly be invading us again. The King of Israel had smitten the Syrians with a very great slaughter, and yet the Prophet warned him, that at the return of the year, the King of Syria would make another attempt. So it is here; the Devil's Power may be broken, but still there will be repeated discoveries of his fury; he will never give up his Cause, nor be out of hope, till we are out of reach in the unmovable Kingdom, and possess'd of the incorruptible inheritance.

1 Kings 20.
21, 22.

2. It is not indispensibly necessary to our overcoming in the Gospel-sense, that we should be Conquerors over him in every particular Temptation. He that is never brought to give his deliberate Consent, may yet be foil'd by an unwilling Surprise. Satan's prevalency is not to be concluded from every Sin of infirmity or weakness; for who then should be saved? Or who then is recovered out of his Snare? The bruised Serpent is not utterly disabled from piercing us with his Sting. When the fiery Darts of the Devil are continually flying so thick and swift as they do, it is not to be imagin'd that every one of them should be quencht as soon as thrown. A Man, who does not

Ephes. 4. 27.

out of choice, or with design, *give place to the Devil*, (which is the main thing that the Apostle forbids and cautions against) may nevertheless be sometimes over-power'd by him.

3. It is not necessary that we should enjoy the certain and comfortable Persuasion of this overcoming in our own minds, 'Tis possible to have the Victory, and for the Enemy to be put to flight, and yet the Dust and Smoak may be so great, that we may not see or know it. Many a weak (and yet sincere) believer under dark and melancholy Clouds, does think himself conquered, when he is at the same time more than Conqueror. It is the usual method of Satan to affright most, where he is capable of hurting least. He finds it no hard thing at some particular seasons to scare us with imaginary Wounds; as Jacob mourned for his Son Joseph, supposing him to be torn in pieces, when his Coat was only dyed in blood, by the Artifice of his malicious Brethren, to cover the delusion! He makes us believe, that we have receiv'd his Temptations, when we have with greatest loathing rejected them; and that he hath fastened the guilt and defilement upon us, when the Sin lies no where but at his own door.

Gen. 37. 31.
33.

4. It is not absolutely necessary to our overcoming of him, that there should be a total extinguishing of that principle in our selves, which disposes us to yield to him. The treacherous party in our own Breasts will not be utterly destroyed, tho' the External Adversary be routed. Nor does any Man in Temptation wholly oppose that Temptation, tho' he do get the mastery of it in the end. Indwelling Sin in the best of Saints will side with the Tempter, and set them at variance against themselves. The Believer in such

a case, is like a Kingdom divided, and yet he stands; but this by virtue of those Divine Succours which are sent in to him, (of which more afterwards). There is always a war in our Members, and too often a Captivity; there is at the best, a Contention and struggle within, which Satan gets some advantage from, but not that which he covers and labours after.

Rom. 7. 23.

Thirdly, To shew wherein the real Conquest of the Devil lies. This *Positive* may easily be gather'd from the foregoing *Negatives*, and therefore the particulars need to be but briefly hinted. As

First, The Devil is truly overcome, when his Seat is thrown down, and an end put to his *alleged Dominion*. If he be deposed from his usurp'd Supremacy, and not suffered to Reign, he is really conquer'd. It is ruling Power which he aims at, and cannot be content without the exercise of; if he cannot Lord it over the Soul, and sway the Scepter there, he loses his end. Wherefore Christ is set up as King, and appointed to be head (by the Soul's free choice, as well as God's powerful Designation) Satan is dragg'd after his *Triumphal Chariot*. You whom Jesus governs, are under victorious Grace, and not the seductive influence of sinful Temptations. Our great Adversary knows no middle Condition between rampling upon our Necks, and lying vanquish'd at our Feet.

Hosea 1. 11.

Secondly, The Devil is indeed overcome, so long as we continue resisting him, tho we still continue assaulted by him. If we stand our ground, we make him flee; if he do not prevail over us, we do in effect prevail against him; as long as he is not entertain'd, he is defeated. It does not serve the Devil's purpose merely to molest us by Temptation, unless he can thereby

James 4. 7.

Gen. 19. 9.

draw forth our Corruption. A Garison that defends it self, and gives continual Repulses to the Enemy, acquits it self very well, tho the Enemy do not retire, or abandon the Siege. So, if the door of the heart be still kept shut against the Tempter, tho the Devil (like those Sodomites in Lot's case) do press sore upon us, and come near to force it, Victory attends us.

Mic. 7. 8.

3. The Devil is really overcome, when we recover from the Sin into which we are fallen, by serious Repentance. He hath accomplisht the least half of his design, in making of us Criminals, except he can keep us impenitent. Our returning to God will (in some respect) undo all the work of the Devil. We may say in this case, as the Church does, *Rejoyce not against me, oh mine Enemy; when I fall, I shall arise.* Our falls by Sin do not please and gratify Satan so much, as our rising again by renewed Conversion does frustrate and disappoint him. When he hath cast us into the mire, he still misseth his principal aim, unless he can perswade us to wallow in it. He that's overtaken with a fault, and speedily restored, cannot be look'd upon as Satan's prey. The Tempter hath no cause to boast, if God heal us by his Grace, so that we dye not of our Wounds.

1 Tim. 4. 7.

4. The Devil is overcome, if God bring us off with victory in the close of all our conflicts. He that at the finishing of his course can say, *I have kept the faith,* may also safely pronounce, *I have fought a good fight.* The Battel may go against us several times throughout the Day, but if in the Evening our warfare issue well, we shall not be hurt of the second death. The Devil very often comes down against us in great wrath, and makes

Rev. 2. 11.

makes very violent onsets; and we may be seiz'd and retaken many a time before the end comes; but the end will determine all, and if that be successful, the reward is ours. *Many a time have they afflicted me* Psalm 129. 2. *from my youth* (says the Church, of another sort of Enemies) *yet they have not prevailed against me; i. e. they have not absolutely prevailed; for after all, I have emerged, and do still subsist.* In short, the blessing of that Tribe belongs to believers, concerning whom dying Jacob prophesied, that a troop should overcome him, but he should overcome at the last. Gen. 49. 19.

The third thing is, to open how it can be said of any persons in this mortal state, That they have overcome the wicked one; for it is here express as a thing past. (*venixergate*) Some perhaps may say, what is this, but to make them triumphant before the time, and encourage them to set up their banners before the danger is over? That this may not therefore be misunderstood, these five following things are proper to be consider'd.

I. Every Believer hath overcome in Christ as his head. *We are more than conquerors through him that loved us,* because he hath so gloriously conquered for us. He bids his Disciples to be of good cheer, because he had overcome the world; and upon the same accounts we may take comfort from his overcoming the Devil, because he did it as a publick person, and therefore it turns to our advantage. Our General fought a single Duel, which gives success to his whole Army. The Second Adam gained as much on the behalf of his spiritual Seed by overcoming, as the First Adam lost to his natural Posterity by being overcome. Our Lord having spoiled Principalities and Powers, his faithful Subjects may also triumph over them. Colos. 2. 15.

2. Be-

2. Believers have overcome in hope and expectation. They have the promise of God to assure them, that in a way of persevering watchfulness, and humble diligence, they shall be finally delivered out of the mouth of the Lion; and therefore they do as securely rest and depend upon it, as if their deliverance were obtained already; tho they do not flatter themselves by it into slothful and careless Presumption. Now there is so little hazard in trusting to God with our Salvation, who hath fully undertaken (after this manner) to effect it, that they which are called, and they which are saved, are but two Denominations for the same Persons. And those things which may with such confidence be expected, are in some sense, as if they were actually had.

3. They have overcome in desire and resolution. They are seeking and striving for the mastery, and are in some regards impatient till they get it. The victorious Palms are in their eye, and they think it long till they have them in their hands. No fight of afflictions is so sharp and tedious to them, as these encounters with polluting temptations. If they had their wish, they would not remain contending with Amalek in the valley, but get up into the mount, and converse with God. However, their fixed purpose of heart is, to hold out so long as God thinks fit to delay their discharge: they will continue warring, till the very moment of their entrance into peace; and are set to resist evil, as others are to do it. Now he that seriously determines in himself, to make no agreement with Hell, may answerably promise himself a happy issue of his opposition to it.

4. They have overcome in part, they are snatch'd out of Satan's jurisdiction, and translated (by a work of sanctification) into the Kingdom of Christ. They have

1 Cor. 1. 18,
24.

Colos. 1. 13.

have gained many victories, which are as so many Earnests and Pledges of the last; they have escap'd the rage of the murthrer of souls *several times*; and this comfortable experience emboldens them to believe that they shall escape it. God hath kept them in *this* and *that*, and the *other hour of temptation*; and from thence they justly collect the certainty of their future preservation; and in the language of the Scripture, that which is certainly future, is often set forth as present or past.

5. They may very well be said to have overcome, because it is but a very *little while* before their warfare will be accomplish'd; the Holy Ghost puts us in mind that it will be shortly; and what will shortly be, is as good as done. Our blessed Lord upon the near approach of his death, cries out, *I have finished the work, &c.* which could not be strictly said till he had given up the ghost, for he was made perfect through his dying sufferings; and yet because his work then wanted so little of being compleated, he tells his Father, *I have done it.* So as soon as the thin vapour of this bodily life vanishes away, our triumph will begin, and it can be no very considerable space before that does so. Our whole time which we pass here upon Earth, is but a narrow edge on this side of Eternity; and therefore when a few days are come, this will be verified of the faithful, which is now spoken by anticipation; *Ye have overcome the wicked one.*

Rom. 16. 20.

John 17. 4.

The fourth thing is to give the Reasons why 'tis the peculiar duty of young ones to endeavour an early victory over this wicked one. Of many that might be named, I propose only these which follow.

IV.

First,

First, The Devil takes possession of us *betimes*, even from the womb. As there are *lusts* which begin to war against the soul, when it first inhabits the body, so there are temptations propounded, which work upon those lusts. The Prince of this world hath his Infantry at his command; as it was foretold concerning Saul, that he would *take the sons of the Israelites* [a righteous punishment of the folly of the Parents in desiring him] and *appoint them to run before his Chariots*. The wicked one often times influences those that are scarce arriv'd to the exercise of Reason, to vent their prophane scoffs against Religion; as he taught the little Children of the City to mock a venerable Prophet. How frequently does he that was a lyar from the beginning, dictate lies to those that are newly crept out of their Cradles! We are born Children of Hell; not only exposed to the wrath of God, but in a state of vassalage to the Devil, and as soon as our Members can be moral instruments in his service, they are yielded up to it. As the Idolatrous Jews of old made their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire to Moloch; so the least piece of Adam, is as a brand in the common burning, till God comes to pluck it out.

Secondly, The power of the Devil is every day increas'd, the longer we continue under it. Therefore wickedness is truly said to burn as the fire; which, after it is once kindled by his breath in our combustible matter, runs along and speeds very fast, and becomes more and more irresistible. Evil men, who are under the conduct of the evil Spirit, cannot but wax worse and worse. They who are in the snares of the Devil, find new entanglements daily; and when he can plead prescription for his residence in us, 'tis the harder to remove him. The Disciples

Disciples could not cast the dumb spirit out of that person in the Gospel, which had come unto him of a child. Satan is easier and sooner enticed at the first, before he hath rooted himself, and been confirm'd in his unrighteous Tenure. When you are given up to him by your own Act, God may give you up in judgment; you chase your enemy for your leader, and God backs that choice with his sentence, that it shall be as you desire to have it. So that if you cannot run with fools men, how can you contend with horses? If you are not able to withstand the Devil now, when he hath possessed you (comparatively) but a little while, how will you do when his Kingdom is more establish'd? The sinner of a hundred, or eighty, or sixty years old is much faster bound in the Devil's Fetters, than the sinner of twenty.

Mark. 9. 18, 21.

Q. 1. 1. 1. 1.

Q. 1. 1. 1. 1.

Jerem. 12. 5.

3. Thirdly, Your compliance with charming temptations now, will furnish Satan with matter of tormenting transitions against you in your riper years, and perhaps to Eternity. How comfortable a reflection is it, when a man can appeal to God with the holy Prophet, My soul hath not been polluted (at least, not knowingly and wilfully) from my youth up, even till now. But the transgressions and iniquities of youth have lain as an heavy burthen upon serious Penitents many years after. The Bruises which they received from Satan then, have been sadly felt in their old age. The pleasing vanities and follies of that time are commonly reveng'd with distracting terrors; more particularly when the Sinner comes to his evil days, wherein the light is darkened, and the clouds return. Then the sins which he hath committed long ago, will present themselves to him, as ready to be done with him in the dust; when he can no longer resist the works of the Devil no longer, they will follow him, and lay him upon

3:

Ezek. 4. 14.

Job 13. 26.

Psal. 25. 7.

Q. 1. 1. 1. 1.

earth, and accompany him (if unrepented of) to Hell. Returning Ephraim was ashamed and confounded, because he bore the reproach of his youth; i. e. of his youthful untamed wantonness. And those Jews that were convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest even to the last: Beginning at the eldest, to note the sense which they had of their own increased guilt, by greater length of time. Satan by this means hath so much the more to upbraid us with; and if the fears do wear out of our memory, they will not out of his.

Jerem. 31. 19.

John 8. 9.

4. Fourthly, There can be little hope of going to your graves, (especially) with internal peace, except you are very early in your conquests of the Devil. When you come within view of the pit, it will be a dismal spectacle to have your first debaucheries, with all the train of consequent licentiousness, set before you. If you would have your evening clear, and not go down in a cloud, you must not suffer the morning of your lives to be overcast and sullied with youthful lusts. Such as have been the slaves of the Devil so long, as from their very youth, may greatly fear to be his Prisoners for ever. It is not indeed to be supposed, how any one can overcome the last enemy, death, without this previous victory over him that hath the power of death. And how soon may that enemy come upon any of us, in our most sprightly time of life, with destructive force like an armed man! How often do we see God taking away one with another, promiscuously, as he sees good? How many thousands are quickly snatch'd away as in a moment, who propos'd to themselves many years to come? so that if they had any thoughts of quitting the Devil's service hereafter, yet in the day that their hasty breath went forth, those thoughts perished together with themselves. Fifth-

Ezek. 16. 50.

Fifthly, The sooner we begin this work, the better able we shall be to carry it on. We know that Disci-

plin'd men, who have been bred up to the wars from the very first, are counted the flower of an Army, and the greatest hopes are built upon their performance.

God can indeed teach the fingers to fight, when the joints are stiff, and the parts are feeble, as he instructs the youngest when they enter the field; but to neglect present advantages in dependance upon God's absolute power, is very foolish and mischievous presumption.

Ordinarily they handle and manage their spiritual weapons best, who have tried them longest. It is ma-

nifest, that custom in evil tends very much to hardening; the people of Samaria had the more regard to Si-

Acts 8. 11.

mon Magus, because he had of a long time bewitched them with his sorceries. And so on the other hand, custom in good is greatly helpful to the new nature, and its operations; the Apostle gives the preheminance to those that are of full age in Religion, because by rea-

Hebr. 5. 14.

son of use they have their senses exercised to discern, &c. The more victories we have gotten over temptations, the more easily we may get the rest.

Sixthly, The earlier we engage in this warfare, the more dear and delightful shall we be to God. As Satan desires to have you, so God desires it, and he will must he take it, to see you gratify an enemy before him? But when young ones come and list themselves under Christ, they ravish his very heart; as John, who is eminently stiled the Disciple whom Jesus loved, is generally suppos'd to be the youngest of them all. The kindness of youth is especially remembred, even when Saints come to their hoary hairs; as they shall carry the Birthright from elder sinners (like Jacob from Esau) so they will be favoured more highly, than such as come in late to God, and are born (as it were) out

6.

Gen. 43. 34. *of due time.* Among all the children of God, his Benjamins use, to be his Darlings, the sons of his right hand; and commonly their measure of spiritual comfort is larger than any of their Brethrens.

7. Prov. 20. 29. *Seventhly,* It will be for your greater and more abundant honour in both worlds. The wise man says, That the glory of young men is their strength; it is indeed remarkably so, when spiritual strength goes along with natural; when, as the bones are moistened with marrow, so the soul is like a watered Garden, full with the influences of grace, and free from the poisonous weeds of Satan's planting. This is the way to be counted to the Lord for a generation; or else you will be base and contemptible, and worse than nothing in the World. It was double credit to Gideon, that he return'd from battle, and had discomfited the host which he went against, before the sun was up. And so it raised the Reputation of David, that he a Stripling, prevailed over the mighty Philistine. Therefore he that would be a true man of renown, let him be as David, and go forth in his youth against the infernal Goliath. This is the achievement which will render you more honourable than the most in this world, and add to your glory in the next also; your Throne in Heaven will be so much the more lifted up, and your Crown the brighter.

8. *Eighthly,* It will prove the best Security to you, from the hurt of those secular Employments and Converses, which you are launching into. It is observable, That our Lord's Signal Conflict with the Tempter, was at the very entrance of his Publick Life and Ministry. Our private Life is less obnoxious in many things to Temptation, than when we are got into the Croud and Hurry of Temporal Affairs, and of mixt Societies. The World is one of the Devil's Seconds; but if we Conquer the God of the World,

World; we make the best provision for overcoming the *World* it self: *You*, who would make a safe and prosperous *Voyage* over this deep and wide *Sea* of Temptations, ought to be well-fortified against the Tempter at your first setting out. Most Persons are cautious of going into infected places, unless they carry some proper *Antidotes* about them; and unquestionably it behoves us much more to take care, that we may be *unspotted* in a *defiling World*, which we cannot be, so long as the *foul Spirit* hath a predominant Interest in us.

Ninthly and *Lastly*, *You* may by this means become useful *Blessings* in the *midst* of the *Land*, and prove instrumental of *reforming* and *saving* a very degenerate People, that seem to be fitted for destruction. If these Nations be retriev'd from the Ruin that threatens them, Satan must be cast down, and his Dominion subverted, which is most likely to be done by your hands. Young ones are compared to the *Arrows* of a mighty man, and 'tis said, that they shall speak with the *Enemies* in the *Gate*. It is too notorious, that for many years past, Wickedness hath run down like a mighty *Stream*; how happy would the Kingdom be, if the rising *Generation* would unite their endeavours for the turning of it! The Devil hath got far more ground in the present Age, than heretofore; and it is your special Province to recover it from him; for it cannot be imagined, that such as are come to their feeble and declining years, who are going off the Stage, and it may be, in many cases (like *Peter*) carried whither they would not, should be so able, or so active. The bad Examples of others, who make these *Times* so perillous as they are, should provoke you to mend them by your own. As, when the sin of the young men (*viz. Eli's Sons*) was

9.

Psalm 127. 4.

5.

John 21. 18.

1 Sam. 2. 17,
so 18.

and the Advantage of

so very great before the Lord, that men for their sakes
 abhorred the Offering of the Lord; it is said, that Sa-
 muel ministered before the Lord, being a Child. The
 more Debauchery is propagated by others of your own
 standing, the more should you discourage and check
 it by your own Eminent Holiness; or else you may
 sadly expect, that the Country which hath brought you
 forth, will at length cast you out together, as unnatural
 Children, and abominable Branches.

V. In the Fifth place, To Apply all this, to those whom
 the Text concerns in a peculiar manner. What can
 be more fitly prest upon young Persons, who have
 not yet overcome the wicked one, than that they
 would now and henceforward labour to do it? And if
 any one be so far wrought upon, as to ask, What
 course shall we take in order to this end? I shall pro-
 pound and advise the ensuing Methods.

First, Look after a change of State. There is an
 indispensable necessity of this, to our getting out of
 Satan's Kingdom, as well as entrance into God's. Every
 man is born like a wild Ass's Colt; (that's your Chara-
 cter, and it is not I that give it, but the Lord) nothing
 can mend this Temper and Disposition, but the making
 of us anew by a Second Birth; and yet till it be
 mended, what can be expected from you, but a mad
 running into Sin, and furious driving towards Hell?
 Souls that are not subdued to Christ by the Spirit in
 the Work of Regeneration, will never be released from
 their Captivity and Vassalage to the Devil. It was ex-
 cellently said by a late worthy Author, *The Devil will
 certainly conquer all whom he fighteth with upon his own
 Dunghill, that is, in a natural State.* So long as we
 are Carnal, our Weapons will be so, and consequent-
 ly not mighty. It is spoken exclusively, *Whatsoever*

is

Job 11. 12.

Mr. W. Mar-
 shall's Gospel-
 Mystery of
 Sanctification,
 p. 88.

is born of God, overcometh the world; and so I may say ^{1 John 5. 4} of overcoming Satan too, none can do it, but they that are born of God.

Secondly, Be sensible of your own remaining ^{2.} *impotency*, even in a gracious and *spiritual State*. As we are wholly *without strength*, before we are born again; so our own strength is not *sufficient* afterwards without renewed succors. Gideon's Son being but a *Youth*, was afraid to draw his Sword against the two Kings of *Midian*, tho his heart was unquestionably ^{Judges 8. 20.} in his Father's Cause: And if the Lord himself do not *rebuke Satan*, and send in *Auxiliary Force* at such seasons to us, we may sadly fear the concluding Event of all. To the best and greatest *Saints*, if left to themselves, and unassisted by God, Satan is truly *invincible*. Therefore Grace already received, is not to be depended on, but the further aids of the Spirit. When we think we can do any thing, we can indeed do nothing; and as the Apostle said, ^{2 Cor. 12. 10.} When I am weak, then am I strong; so on the contrary, when we are *strongest* in our own Opinion, we always find our selves to be really *weakest*. There is a vast difference between the success of those that *trust on God's arm*, and of them that *lean to their own imaginary Power*. Even the youths shall faint, and the young men shall utterly fall (their self-confidence will deceive and destroy ^{Isaiah 40. 30,} them) but they that wait upon the Lord, shall renew ^{31.} their strength. If then, you will escape in the *Spiritual Battels*, be deeply convinc'd that your case is like that of *Jehsaphat*, and your frame ought to be so; ^{2 Chron. 20.} We have no might against this great company that comes against us, neither know we what to do, but our eyes are ^{12.} upon thee.

Thirdly, Exercise Faith in a special manner upon ^{3.} Jesus Christ, as the Captain of your Salvation. Consider:

der him particularly, as your *Omnipotent Leader* in this War, as one who is every way qualified, both to *repel* your Enemies, and to *rescue* you. *God's Israel* have the *shout* of this King among them; he that sits at *God's right hand*, does also stand at theirs. Have an eye therefore, not only to his infinitely prudent Conduct, but to his saving Abilities. As we must follow him, by receiving his Directions and Commands, so we should rest upon him for our Preservation and Support. We have the promise of the Father to embolden us, that his Son shall divide the Spoil with the strong; and the blessed Heir of such a promise, may justly be our hope. Nothing can cover us from the rage of him that contends with us, but this Shield of Faith; and this will effectually do it. Balack thought that Balaam's cursing of Israel, would enable him to overcome and drive them out; but tho he was mistaken in that, we cannot look for too much from him; of whom Balaam prophesied. The Prince of this World being judged by Christ, and lying under his Sentence, our believing on Christ, must greatly help our Victory.

4.

Fourthly, Let your Holiness be Universal. Neglect

Ephes. 6. 11.

not the putting on of any part of the Armour of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the Devil.

2 Cor. 6. 7.

If it be not on our right hand, and on our left, we are but weakly defended against those Adversaries that surround us on every side. As we cannot successfully mortify any lust, unless we do every one; so we cannot expect to conquer any sort of Temptations, unless we set our selves resolutely to conquer all. Let Sin be odious to you, as Sin, and then you will fly from the whole kind. It was therefore a good rule given by a great Divine, (tho borrowed, as he acknowledges, from another) *Cum fuga temptationis conjungenda*

Ames. de Con-
scientia. p. 95.

est

est indignatio. Temptations are to be rejected with abhorrence; for there can be no true holiness, if there is not a loathing of the contrary.

Fifthly, Resist the Devil vigorously at the first. A faint resistance gives him mighty encouragement; and if we do not beat him back in his first approaches towards us, 'tis a greater difficulty to do it when he is got within us. As the Apostle says, That they gave place to the false teachers, no, not for an hour; so we should not yield to the suggestions of this lying Spirit, so much as for a moment. Prepare against your Adversary when you discern him a great way off, and suffer him not to make his gradual advances unregarded and undisturb'd. It does not only behove us to watch and pray, that we may not enter into temptation; but to lift up a prayer as soon as we are in it, and to stand upon our guard as long as it continues upon us. Very little introductions of sin (if let alone, and not speedily suppress'd) will increase and swell to greater wickedness; as the thickest Ice which will at length bear the vastest weight, frequently begins with a thin shaking cream. Gala. 2. 5.

Sixthly, Take heed of rebelling against light; for this is to take part with the Devil, who never thinks himself sure of us, till (like the Philistines in Sampson's case) he hath put out our eyes. Stifling of Convictions which spring up within, or are offer'd from without, is a making way for temptations. Satan does his work effectually, when he hath overcome the struggles of conscience, and harden'd us against the admonitions of wise reprovers. Stubborn pride in chusing of our own ways, and withstanding all that tends to discover or remedy the Errors of them, is the plague of unbridled youth. Nor can there be any worse token of remediless destruction; as the Prophet told Amaziah, I Matt. 26. 41

E

know 16.

know that God hath determined to destroy thee, because thou hast not hearkened to my counsel.

7. *Seventhly, Let the word of God abide in you. This is mentioned in the next verse following the Text, (where the words which I have endeavoured to open, are repeated with enlargement) I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one. This abiding of the word, is a means of strengthening, and by consequence, of overcoming. The hiding of sin in our hearts, thrusts out the Word; but the hiding of the Word there, will keep out sin. If this Word be really engrafted, temptations will be fruitless. This is the sharp sword of the spirit, which hath a peculiar edge to cut them in sunder. David found the benefit of it, in being kept from the paths of the destroyer. Our Lord himself fought with this Weapon, It is written; and hath thereby recommended it to our constant use. Other Writings are but sorry Paper Breastplates and miserable Defensatives, in comparison of these. If humane Authorities be urged against the Tempter, instead of Divine, he'll be ready to reply, as he did to those vagabond Jews, that pretended to be Exorcists, Jesus I know, and Paul I know, but who are ye? the Devil must be put to silence with that which God hath spoken; and therefore he that is most mighty in the Scriptures, is likely to be best fortified against this unclean spirit.*

Ver. 14.

Ephes. 6. 17.

Psal. 17. 4.

Acts 19. 15.

T H E E N D.

